



How Vova Changed His Ways

Agnia
Barto







Vova was a little bear,
All he did was sulk and stare,
Sulk and stare and frown and brood,
Which, you see, is very rude.





When we told him, "Don't be glum!"
He would glare and bite his thumb.
When we told him, "Come and play!"



He would pout and turn away.
When we offered him our ball,
He would not reply at all.







Vova's stares and Vova's sneers
Nearly drove us all to tears,
And we thought and thought for days
How to make him change his ways.



One fine morning, frowning hard,
Out we came into the yard.
Out we came, as was agreed,
Very long of face indeed.



As for Baby Lyuba, she
Looked as sore as sore can be.

"Vova, watch!" we called to him,
"Aren't we looking awful grim?"

"Vova, watch!" we called again,
"And you'll see why we complain."



Vova, clearly at a loss,
Tried to show that he was cross,
But we made so droll a sight
That instead he laughed outright.



“Say,” he asked, and down he sat,
“Do I look as bad as that?”





But before we had replied,
He was laughing till he cried.





“Watch!” said we, and with a sigh
Made a face so very wry
That he begged for us to stop,
Saying he was fit to drop.





Now to our relief and joy,
Vova is a different boy:
Always happy, always gay,
Always glad to join in play.
No one sees him frown or stare,
No one ever calls him Bear.





And if he begins to pout,
With a laugh we call, "Look out!"

Brought up short, he makes no fuss,
Only grins, and laughs with us.







Translated from the Russian by Irina Zheleznova

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ЕСТЬ ТАКИЕ МАЛЬЧИКИ
На английском языке

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ИБ 7283 Б $\frac{70801-312}{014(01)-79}$ без объявл. 4803010102